PROJECT
BLACK SKY
TM
FEATURING
CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT &
BRAIN BOY
FREE
DARK HORSE
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FREE COMIC BOOK DAY
FRED VAN LENTE
MICHAEL BROUSSARD

FEATURING

CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT®

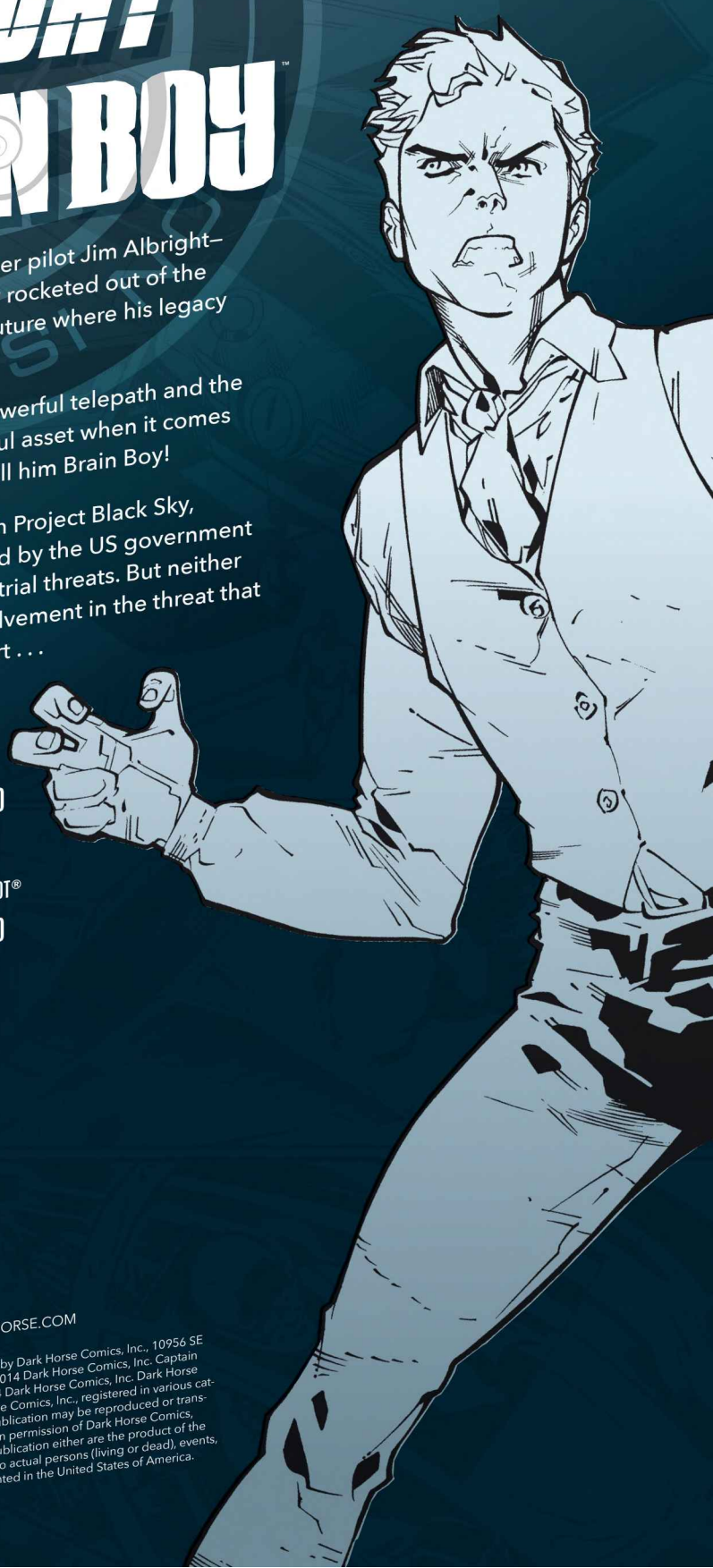
AND

BRAIN BOY™

Genius inventor and expert fighter pilot Jim Albright–a.k.a. Captain Midnight–recently rocketed out of the Bermuda Triangle and found a future where his legacy has been corrupted.

Matt Price is the world's most powerful telepath and the US Secret Service's most powerful asset when it comes to national security–just don't call him Brain Boy!

Each hero has crossed paths with Project Black Sky, a rogue agency originally created by the US government to protect Earth from extraterrestrial threats. But neither hero anticipates Black Sky's involvement in the threat that awaits them in the Nevada desert . . .



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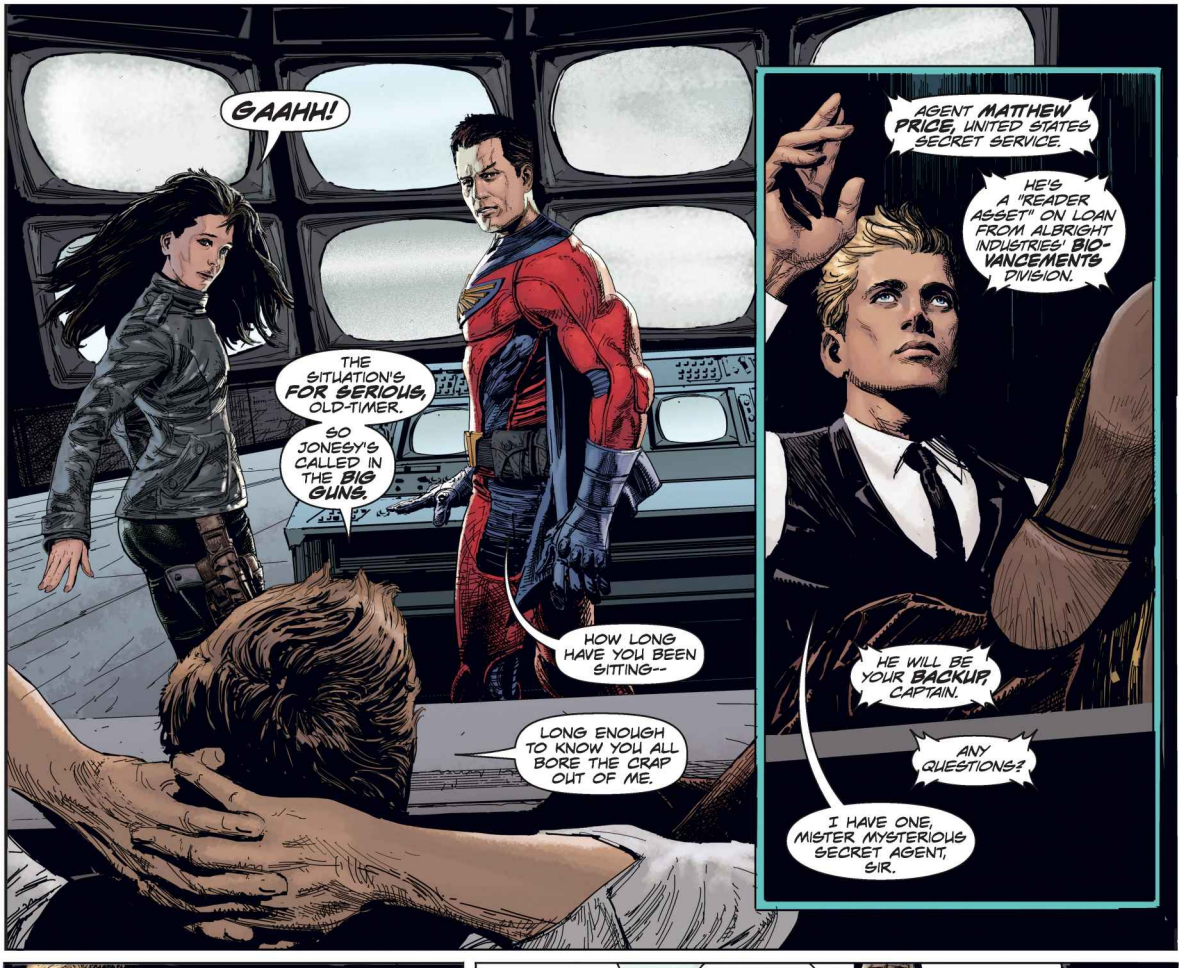
JIM ALBRIGHT, WHOSE WIKIPEDIA PAGE IS TITLED "CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT," WAS BORN IN 1912.
HE WAS AN INVENTOR AND AN INDUSTRIALIST AND A FIGHTER PILOT.
DURING WORLD WAR II, HE IMAGINED HE WAS FIGHTING FOR A FUTURE LIKE THIS.
I CAN READ HIS MIND AS PLAIN AS THE NUTRITIONAL PANEL ON A BOX OF CEREAL BECAUSE I'M MATTHEW PRICE.
(THAT'S ME ON THE LEFT THERE.)
NO, YOU MAY NOT CALL ME "BRAIN BOY."
MY PRESENT--OUR PRESENT--IS THE FUTURE CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT ACTUALLY FOUND HIMSELF IN.

A FUTURE THAT IS ABOUT TO END.
CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT AND BRAIN BOY IN...
BLACK SKY

Before:
BONG BONG BONG
ATTENTION, CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT... COME IN, CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT...
THE HOUR HAS STRUCK.
BONG BONG BONG
WE HAVE AN URGENT MISSION FOR THE SECRET SQUADRON!
BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE HEARD THE TOLL--NOT SINCE ROOSEVELT'S FOURTH INAUGURAL--
THAT RELIC SCARED THE HECK OUT OF ME--WHY, OH WHY, WON'T YOU CARRY A CELL PHONE?
MIDNIGHT HERE, AGENT JONES--GO AHEAD.
AT APPROXIMATELY 0835 THIS MORNING, A BIOLOGICAL WEAPON, CODE NAMED "APEX," WAS HIJACKED FROM NEVADA'S CINNABAR FLATS RESEARCH FACILITY.
THE SQUADRON MUST INTERCEPT AND RECAPTURE THIS WEAPON BEFORE IT FALLS INTO THE WRONG HANDS.
CINNABAR FLATS IS SUPPOSED TO BE UNDER THE AIR FORCE--IS THERE A REASON THEY CAN'T HANDLE THIS?
TCH. YOUR GRANDMOTHER NEVER SHOWED SUCH SUSPICION WHEN SHE SERVED AS MY AIDE, CHARLOTTE.
I KNOW. SHE DRANK.
MY HIPS CAN'T TAKE THE CARBS.

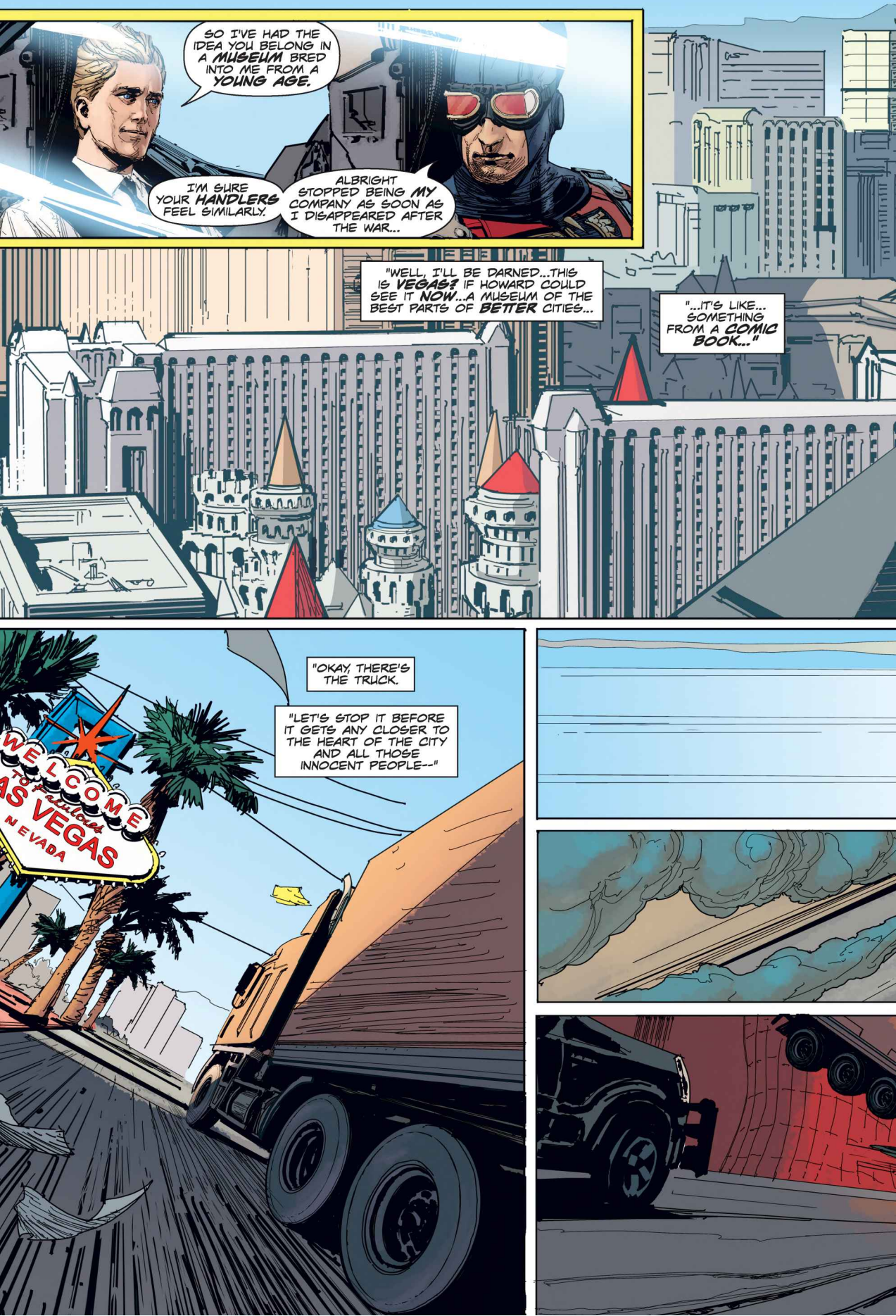
I'LL DEPLOY IMMEDIATELY, AGENT JONES. BUT--
--YOU REFER TO THE SQUADRON. THERE'S ONLY ONE OF ME.
NOT ANYMORE.


GAAHH!
THE SITUATION'S FOR SERIOUS, OLD-TIMER.
SO JONESY'S CALLED IN THE BIG GUNS.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN SITTING--
LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW YOU ALL BORE THE CRAP OUT OF ME.
AGENT MATTHEW PRICE, UNITED STATES SECRET SERVICE.
HE'S A "READER ASSET" ON LOAN FROM ALBRIGHT INDUSTRIES' BIO-VANCEMENTS DIVISION.
HE WILL BE YOUR BACKUP, CAPTAIN.
ANY QUESTIONS?
I HAVE ONE, MISTER MYSTERIOUS SECRET AGENT, SIR.

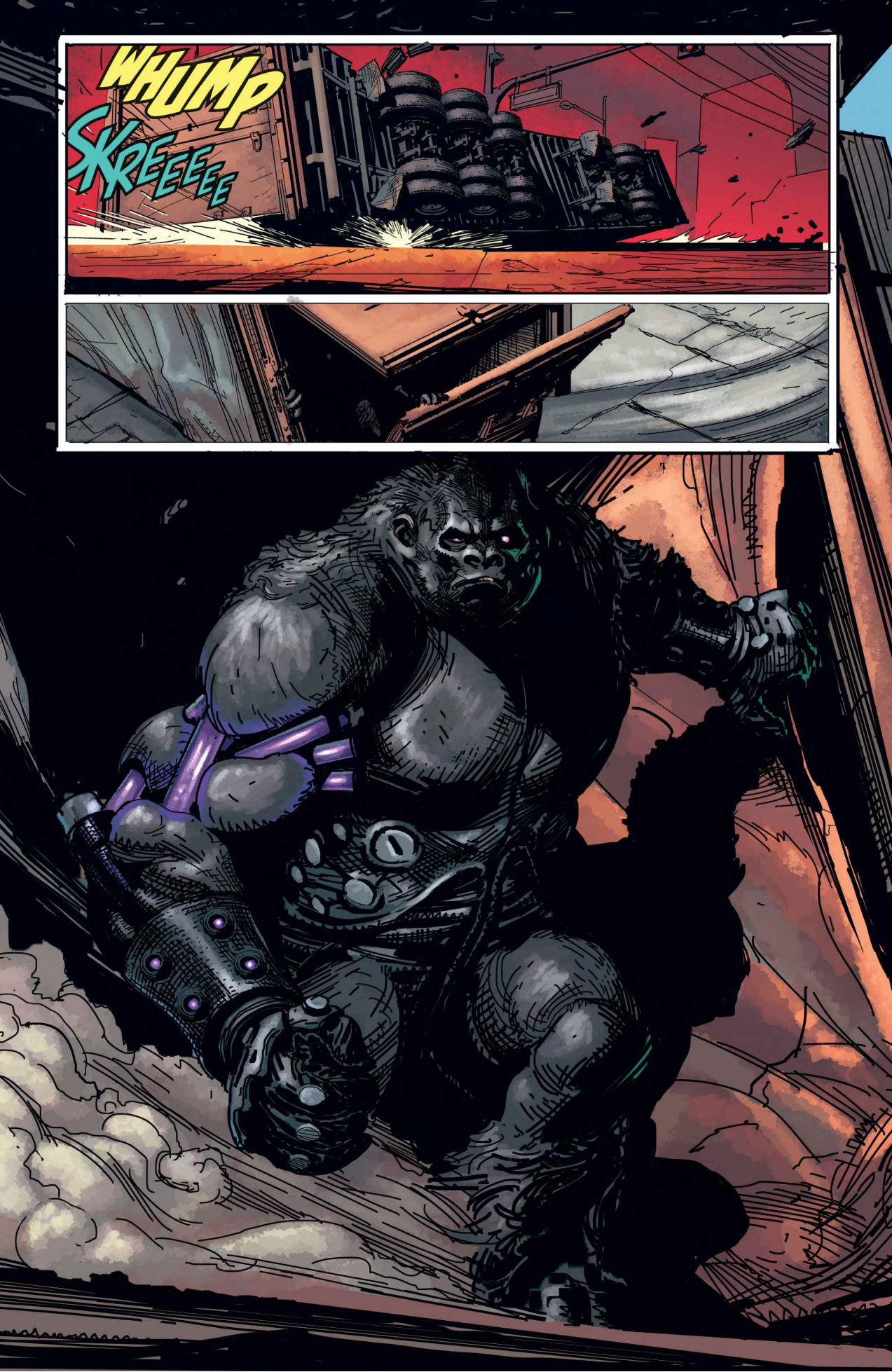
DOES HE ACTUALLY WEAR THAT IN PUBLIC?

PERMISSION TO MURDERIZE, CAPTAIN.
PERMISSION DENIED, MAJOR...

"...AT LEAST WAIT UNTIL THE MISSION'S DONE."
WOW.
YOUR SUPERPOWER IS YOU OWN A PLANE.
IF YOU STARTED COLLECTING YOUR PEE IN MASON JARS...
...YOU COULD CHANGE YOUR NAME TO "CAPTAIN HOWARD HUGHES."
DON'T MAKE ME WASH YOUR MOUTH OUT, KID. HOWARD WAS A FRIEND.
"OH, I KNOW, CAPTAIN. I KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU THAN YOU THINK.
"I GREW UP ON ALBRIGHT'S BIO-VANCEMENT COMPOUND IN OREGON. YOUR COMPANY RAISED ME AFTER MY FOLKS DIED.
"THERE WASN'T AN UNUSED CORNER IN THAT DUMP THAT WASN'T DEVOTED TO YOUR EXPLOITS."


SO I'VE HAD THE IDEA YOU BELONG IN A MUSEUM BRED INTO ME FROM A YOUNG AGE.
I'M SURE YOUR HANDLERS FEEL SIMILARLY.
ALBRIGHT STOPPED BEING MY COMPANY AS SOON AS I DISAPPEARED AFTER THE WAR...
"WELL, I'LL BE DARNED...THIS IS VEGAS! IF HOWARD COULD SEE IT NOW...A MUSEUM OF THE BEST PARTS OF BETTER CITIES...
"...IT'S LIKE... SOMETHING FROM A COMIC BOOK..."
"OKAY, THERE'S THE TRUCK.
"LET'S STOP IT BEFORE IT GETS ANY CLOSER TO THE HEART OF THE CITY AND ALL THOSE INNOCENT PEOPLE--"
WELCOME
AS VEGAS
NEVADA

MOM
"BLARG! AREN'T YOU EVEN GONNA TRY TO ASSIMILATE? IT'S CALLED THE INTERWEBS, OLD MAN, AND IT IS YOUR FRIEND."
"IF THAT'S WHERE YOU GET YOUR MANNERS FROM, KID, I'LL PASS..."
CHOOM
CHOOM
FWEEE
WHOMP
WHOMP


WHUMP
SKREEEEE

WHOA.
TELL ME...TELL ME YOU'RE SEEING WHAT I'M SEEING.
WAIT. DON'T.
WHAT THE SAM HILL...?
Y'KNOW, HERE'S ONE THING I NEVER UNDERSTOOD:
WHO THE HELL IS "SAM HILL," ANYWAY--?
I'LL TELL YOU WHEN YOU'RE OLDER.
BUT FIRST, I'M TAKING THIS BIG FELLA...
...OUT?

THERE'S A MONKEY ON THE WING OF THIS PLANE!
RRARGGH!

ABANDON SHIP!
AND GORILLAS ARE APES, NOT MONKEYS.
THEY'RE CALLED BOOKS, JUNIOR.
KKRASH
THEY'RE YOUR FRIENDS.
DUDE, NICE CALL-BACK.

WHOA! I AM GETTING NO PSYCHIC SIGNAL WHEN HE DOES THAT.
STAY BACK! LET ME HANDLE TH--
GRAHH!
AND THEY SAY THE OLD ARE SUPPOSED TO BE WISE.
KRNCH
GUESS IT'S UP TO ME. IT ALWAYS !--
UHHH!
KRONK

sVegas Blvd
RAAAH!
BLACK
SKY
?
NO
GO
MAKE
PLAN
APE
X
STOP
BADS
APE
X
BEST
ALL
BOSS
GO
MAKE
PLAN
MAKE
PLAN
EEE EEE EEE EEE EEE

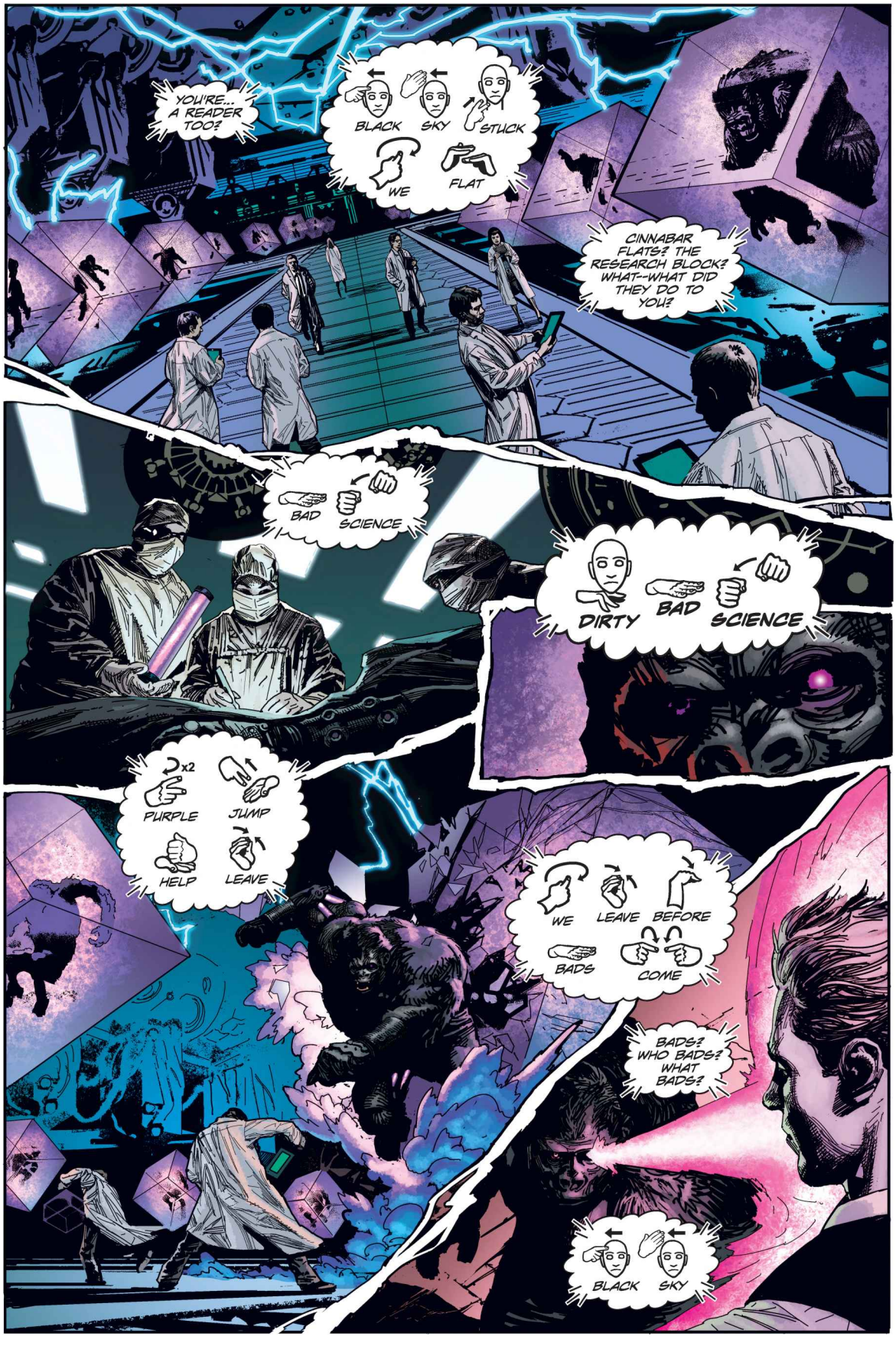
RRRAAGGHHH!
YOU'RE A BIG FELLA.
KODOKAN JUDO WORKS REAL WELL ON BIG FELLAS.

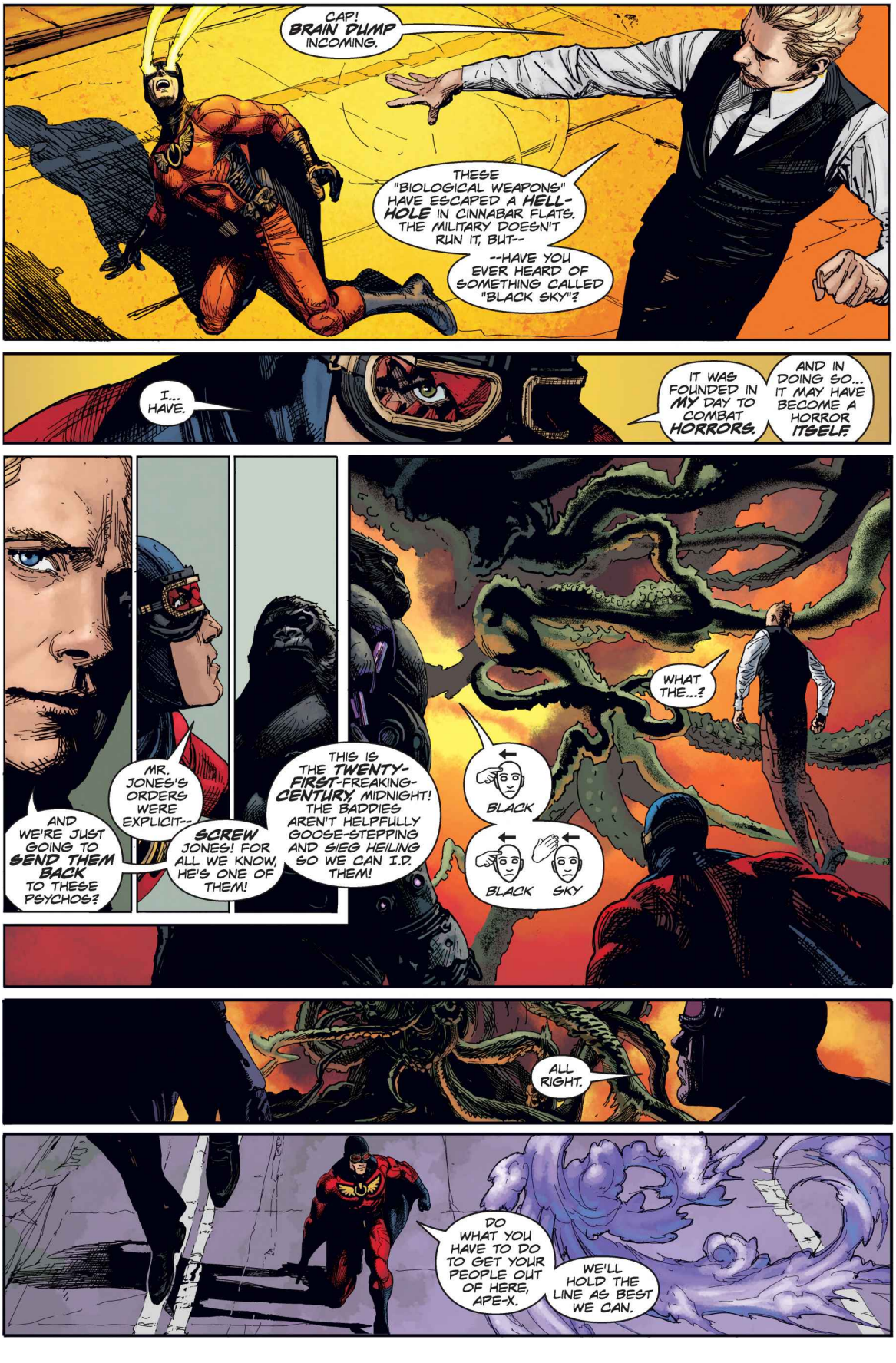
I GOT A HUNDRED ON THE GORILLA!
NO WAY! I SEEN CAP WHIP NAZIS WITH THE BEST OF 'EM! TWO HUNDRED ON THE 'MURRICAN!

PLEASE, PEOPLE, PLEASE KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!

WE'RE SEALING THIS AREA UNDER QUARANTINE!
SCREEEEEEECH

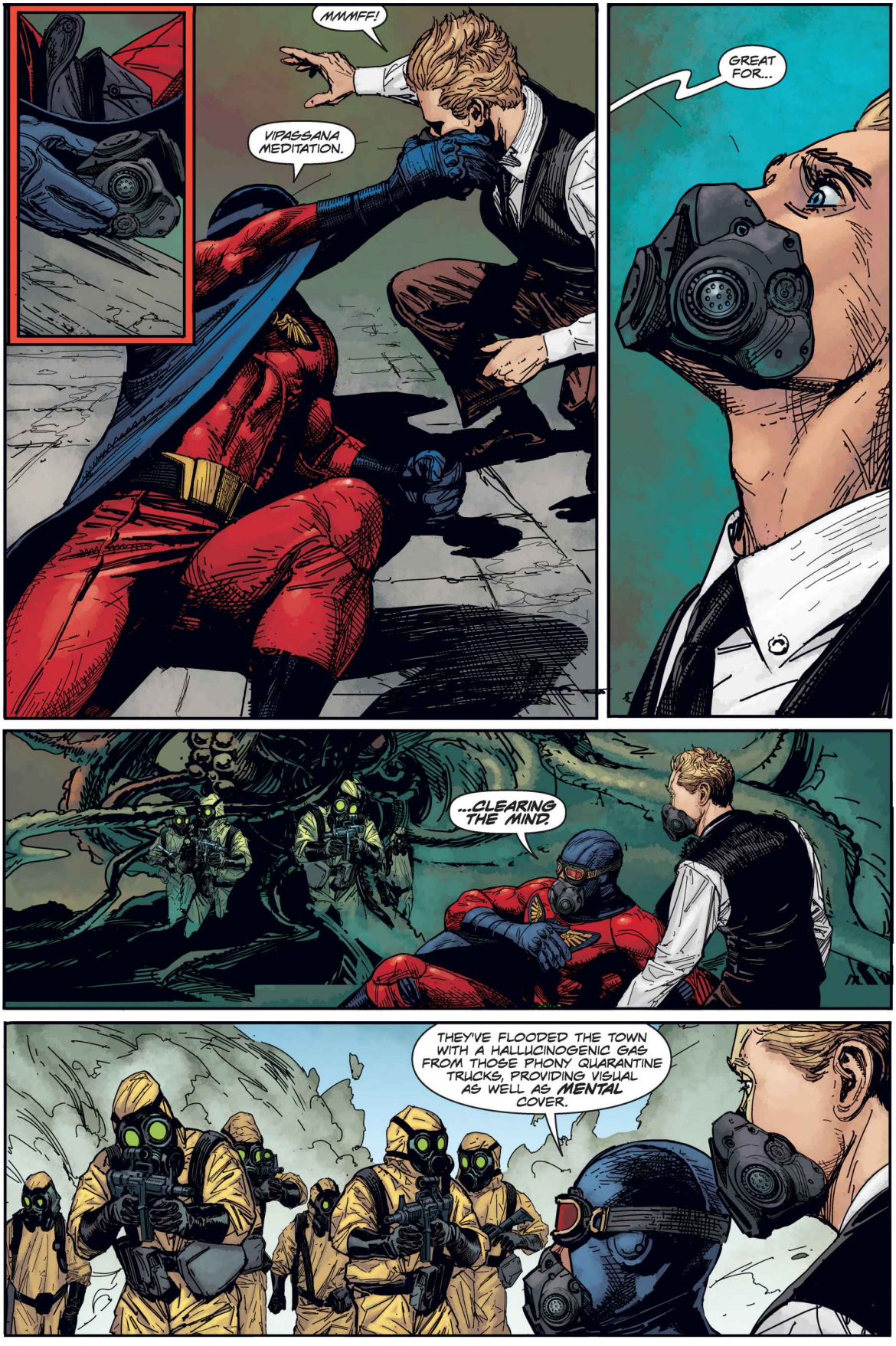
EEEE
EEE
EEE
EEEE
EEE
EEE
MAKE
PLAN
YOU CRACKED TWO OF MY FREAKING RIBS, KONG!
I'M GONNA TURN YOUR BRAIN INTO FECES FOR--
FZZASH
GAAH!


YOU'RE... A READER TOO?
BLACK
SKY
STUCK
WE
FLAT
CINNABAR FLATS? THE RESEARCH BLOCK? WHAT--WHAT DID THEY DO TO YOU?
BAD
SCIENCE
DIRTY
BAD
SCIENCE
x2
PURPLE
JUMP
HELP
LEAVE
WE
LEAVE
BEFORE
BADS
COME
BADS? WHO BADS? WHAT BADS?
BLACK
SKY


CAP! BRAIN DUMP INCOMING.
THESE "BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS" HAVE ESCAPED A HELL-HOLE IN CINNABAR FLATS. THE MILITARY DOESN'T RUN IT, BUT--
--HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SOMETHING CALLED "BLACK SKY"?
I... HAVE.
IT WAS FOUNDED IN MY DAY TO COMBAT HORRORS.
AND IN DOING SO... IT MAY HAVE BECOME A HORROR ITSELF.
AND WE'RE JUST GOING TO SEND THEM BACK TO THESE PSYCHOS?
MR. JONES'S ORDERS WERE EXPLICIT--
SCREW JONES! FOR ALL WE KNOW, HE'S ONE OF THEM!
THIS IS THE TWENTY-FIRST-FREAKING-CENTURY, MIDNIGHT! THE BADDIES AREN'T HELPFULLY GOOSE-STEPPING AND SIEG HEILING SO WE CAN I.D. THEM!
WHAT THE...?
BLACK
BLACK
SKY
ALL RIGHT.
DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO TO GET YOUR PEOPLE OUT OF HERE, APE-X.
WE'LL HOLD THE LINE AS BEST WE CAN.

DONNING MY ESCAPE HOOD IN CASE THAT CLOUD'S TOXIC.
KID, COME DOWN HERE-- I'VE GOT AN EXTRA ONE FOR YOU.
LET'S SWITCH TO THOUGHT COMMUNICATION ONLY--THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO EAVESDROP ON SHORTWAVE.
I NEED YOU TO BE MY EYES AND EARS UP THERE, MATT-- TELL ME WHAT THEY'RE DOING BEFORE THEY KNOW THEM-SELVES.
MATT? YOU READING ME? I NEED YOU TO--
ONE OF
ONE OF THEM
APPLE-SAUCE.

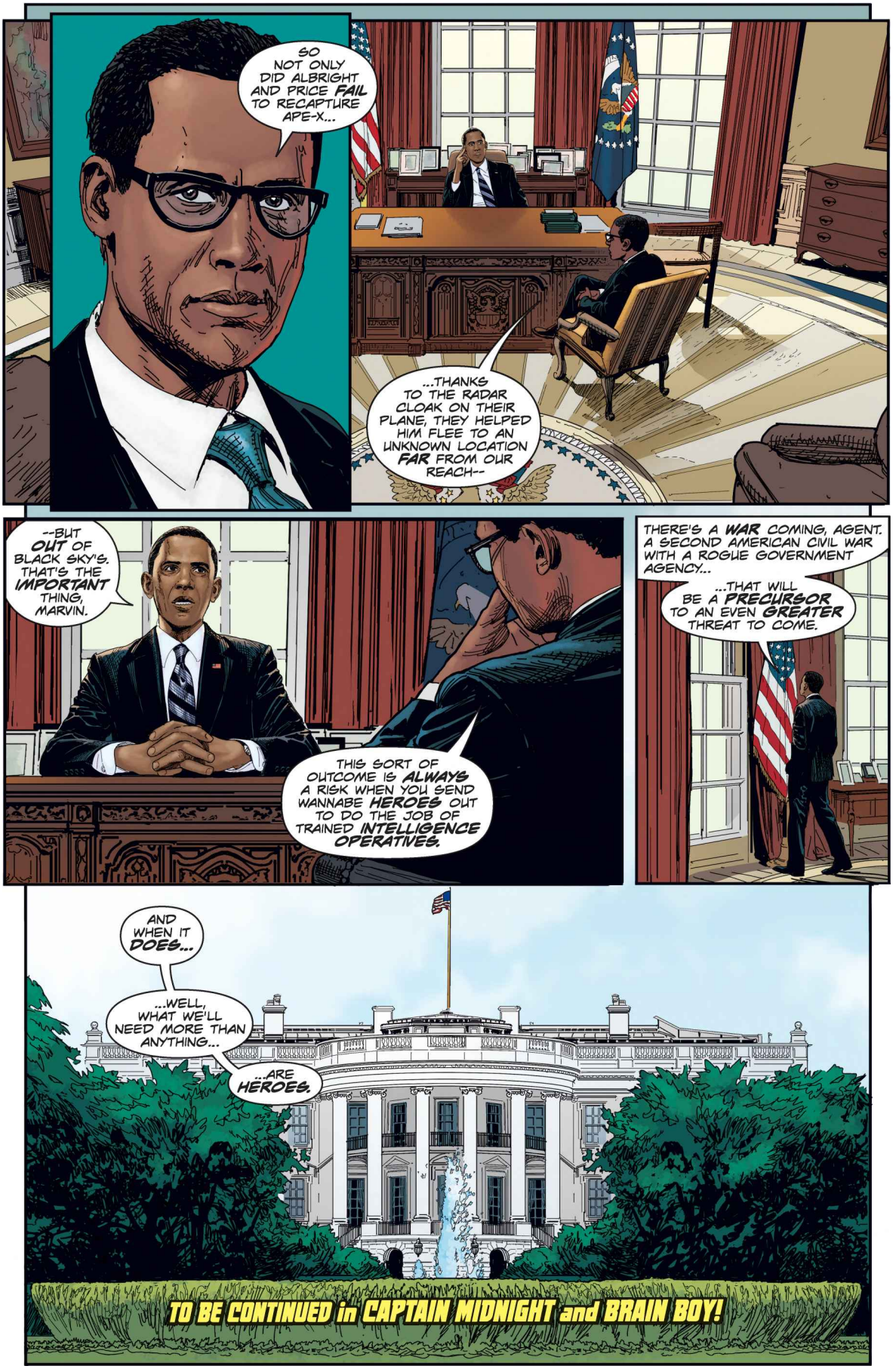
C'MON, PRICE! IT'S ME! THE CAPTAIN!
YOU GREW UP WITH ME!
WITH THE DECODER RINGS AND THE OVALTINE AND THE JUNIOR FLIERS CLUB!
I'M A HARMLESS CORNBALL, REMEMB--
=UHNNH=
NO TALK WITH STAINS
STAINS JUST GET WIPED AWAY


MMMFF!
VIPASSANA MEDITATION.
GREAT FOR...
...CLEARING THE MIND.
THEY'VE FLOODED THE TOWN WITH A HALLUCINOGENIC GAS FROM THOSE PHONY QUARANTINE TRUCKS, PROVIDING VISUAL AS WELL AS MENTAL COVER.

NOBODY MESSES WITH MY MIND!
THAT'S MY JOB!
ONCE WE TAKE THEM OUT, WE CAN FIGURE OUT A WAY TO BLOW THAT MIST OUT INTO THE DESERT--

RROOARRR
DUDE!
THOSE MONKEYS TOTALLY JACKED YOUR PLANE!
"GOOD. (AND THEY'RE APES.)
"I HOPE WHEREVER THEY RUN TO, BLACK SKY CAN'T FOLLOW...
"...I HOPE THAT'S POSSIBLE."
MAYBE I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU, MIDNIGHT.
OH NO, I'M TOTALLY RIGHT ABOUT THAT. EVEN THE WORD "CORNBALL" IS CORNBALL.
ABOUT BEING A CORN-BALL?
I MEAN, MAYBE YOU'RE NOT COMPLETELY USELESS.
GEE, THANKS.
HA! "APEX."
"APE."
"X."
WHAT?
I JUST GOT THAT.

HOME
HOME
BEST
HOME
FOREVER
HOME
HOME
"WE LOST ALL TRACK OF THEM, SIR."


SO NOT ONLY DID ALBRIGHT AND PRICE FAIL TO RECAPTURE APE-X...
...THANKS TO THE RADAR CLOAK ON THEIR PLANE, THEY HELPED HIM FLEE TO AN UNKNOWN LOCATION FAR FROM OUR REACH--
--BUT OUT OF BLACK SKY'S. THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING, MARVIN.
THIS SORT OF OUTCOME IS ALWAYS A RISK WHEN YOU SEND WANNABE HEROES OUT TO DO THE JOB OF TRAINED INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVES.
THERE'S A WAR COMING, AGENT. A SECOND AMERICAN CIVIL WAR WITH A ROGUE GOVERNMENT AGENCY...
...THAT WILL BE A PRECURSOR TO AN EVEN GREATER THREAT TO COME.
AND WHEN IT DOES...
...WELL, WHAT WE'LL NEED MORE THAN ANYTHING...
...ARE HEROES.
TO BE CONTINUED in CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT and BRAIN BOY!

AFTER MIDNIGHT

CORRESPONDENCE FROM CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT'S SECRET SQUADRON

SEND YOUR LETTERS TO MIDNIGHT@DARKHORSE.COM

For those of you who've been following our superhero books, I hope you enjoyed this doozy of an action-packed team-up issue from Fred Van Lente and Michael Broussard! And for all you newcomers, welcome to the world of Project Black Sky! What is Project Black Sky? Well, don't worry, we're just getting into that.

This issue kicks off a year's worth of comics that delve into a mystery that's been popping up all over our superhero comics. What, or who, is Project Black Sky? In this issue, you see the first modern run-in our heroes have had with the covert group. And the list of upcoming releases here can help you keep up on the mystery in the coming months. If you want to catch up fully, here are the titles you want to be reading: **Captain Midnight**, **Ghost**, **X**, **Brain Boy**, **Skyman**, **Blackout**, *and* **The Occultist**.

And make sure to keep an eye on ProjectBlackSky.net, where we'll be delving into the history of the mysterious Project Black Sky with an exclusive online comic!

JIM

Jim Gibbons
Editor

PROJECT BLACK SKY CHECKLIST

MAY

- ☐ Ghost *#4 (5/7/14)*
- ☐ X *#13 (5/14/14)*
- ☐ Brain Boy: The Men from G.E.S.T.A.L.T. *#1 (5/21/14)*
- ☐ Blackout *#3 (5/28/14)*
- ☐ Captain Midnight *#11 (5/28/14)*
- ☐ Captain Midnight *Vol. 2:* Brave Old World *(5/28/14)*

JUNE

- ☐ Ghost *#5 (6/4/14)*
- ☐ Two Past Midnight *TPB, featuring Ghost, X, and Captain Midnight (6/11/14)*
- ☐ X *#14 (6/11/14)*
- ☐ Brain Boy: The Men from G.E.S.T.A.L.T. *#2 (6/18/14)*
- ☐ Blackout *#4 (6/25/14)*
- ☐ Captain Midnight *#12 (6/25/14)*

JULY

- ☐ Ghost *#6 (7/2/14)*
- ☐ X *#15 (7/9/14)*
- ☐ Brain Boy: The Men from G.E.S.T.A.L.T. *#3 (7/16/14)*
- ☐ Captain Midnight *#13 (7/30/14)*

AGENT MATT PRICE WILL RETURN IN **BRAIN BOY: THE MEN FROM G.E.S.T.A.L.T.** *#1* . . .

. . . COMING TO FINE COMIC SHOPS ON MAY 21!

BLACK SKY: A MYSTERY IN ANY LANGUAGE!

After he'd signed on to write the best buddy comedy action film/comic in Project Black Sky history (so far!), Fred Van Lente had a novel idea for the resurrection of the Comics Greatest World character Ape-X, the psychic cyborg gorilla: Ape-X and his fellow escapees would communicate via sign language like Koko, the real-life gorilla that used to live at the San Francisco Zoo.

But how do you showcase American Sign Language in a comic?

Thankfully, the venerable Nate Piekos agreed to be our letterer, so we had one of the masters to take on this challenge. Here's how he did it, in his own words . . .

A couple of months before I started work on *Free Comic Book Day 2014: Project Black Sky*, Fred Van Lente sent me an e-mail that went something like: "Hey, Nate! You're going to hate my guts, but I have this really great idea!" Followed by a link to an American Sign Language website.

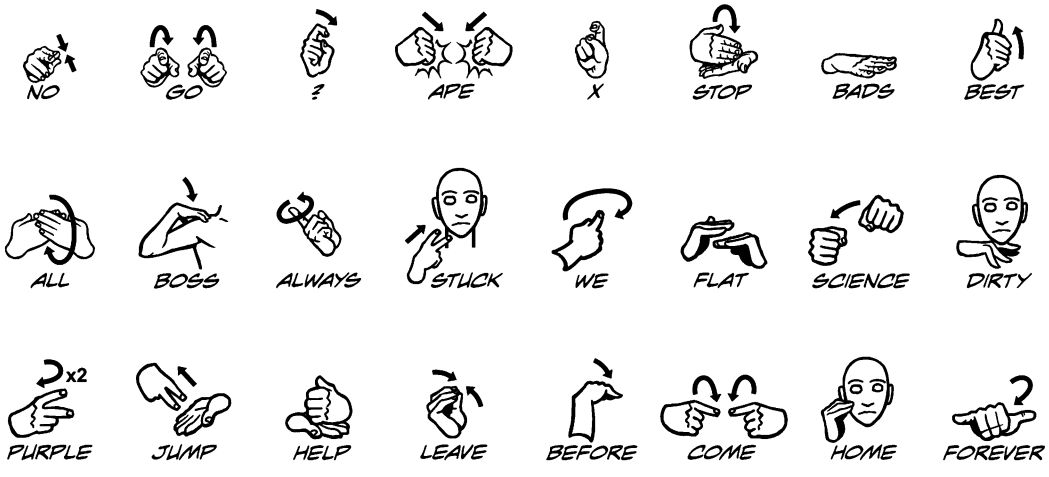
When it actually came time to letter the issue, Fred, [editor] Jim Gibbons, [assistant editor] Spencer Cushing, and I spent a day mass e-mailing each other trying to figure out the best way for this to work. Originally, Fred had found a sign language font, but I was wary of usage rights, and it was just the basic alphabet. Most of the words in the script had their own unique signs.

Luckily, I'm not only a letterer, but a designer and illustrator as well. I offered to draw each of the pictograms you saw in this comic. Originally, I wanted to draw each little motion involved with a single sign. Luckily, Fred talked me out of that. It could easily have tripled the number of pictograms—and there would never have been enough room for them all, and we were under a tight deadline that allowed for no do-overs.

So, using lots of website references, I drew each pictogram, converted them to resizable vectors, and built a miniature library as we went along. I knew they would have to be legible at very small size, so the hard part was minimizing detail and maximizing each hand's gestural qualities.

It was a lot of work, but I'm hoping just one person fluent in American Sign Language will approach me someday and tell me they understood the pictograms perfectly!

Let us know how we did, ASL-fluent readers! Drop us a line at brainboy@darkhorse.com!



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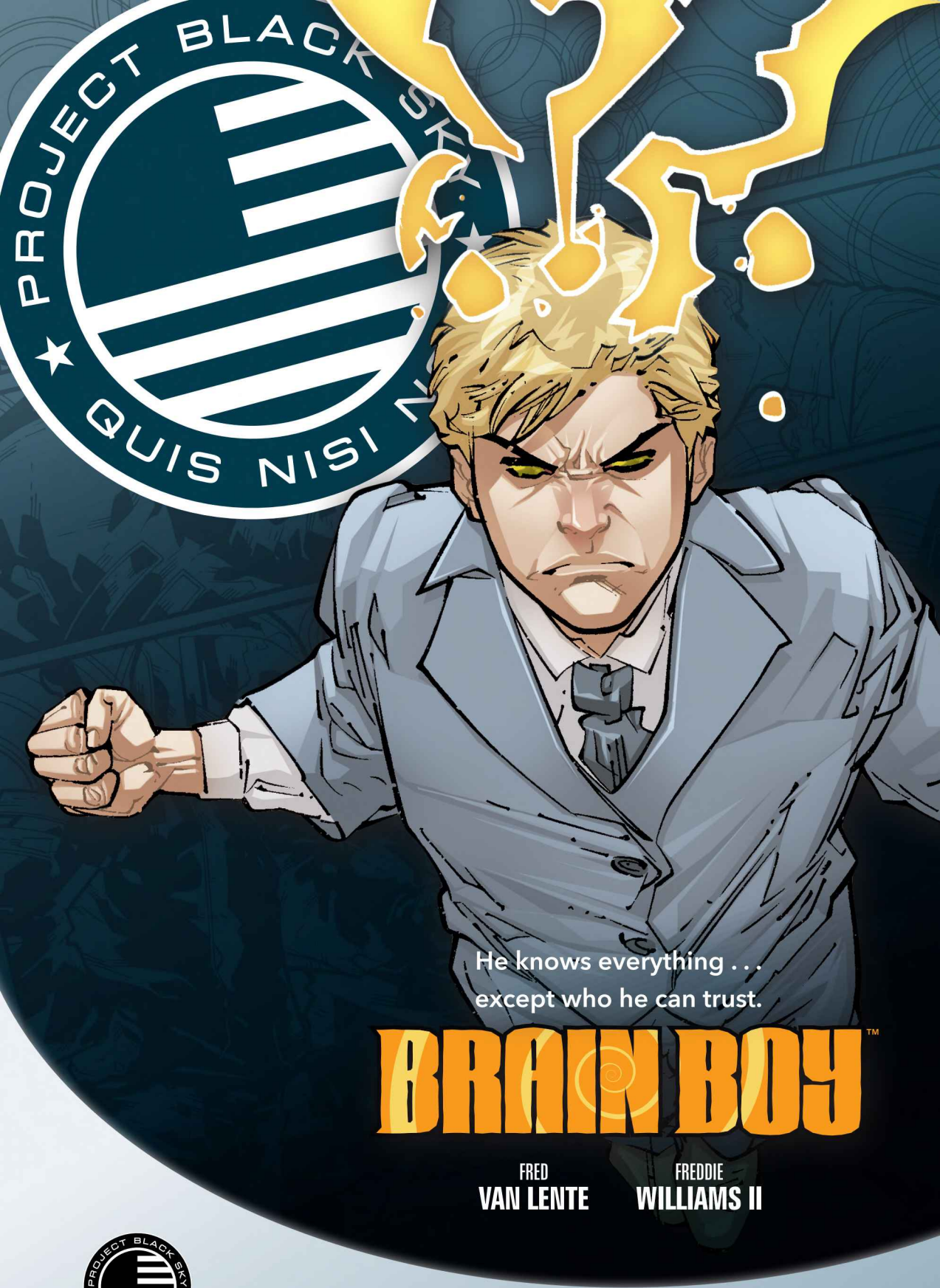

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